COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

DEFENDER

Volume 2, Issue 3 • Fall 2017

MARVEL

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Censorship is about control. In the largest instance, it's the control exerted by government bodies over the expression rights of private citizens. But there are other kinds of censorship that involve individuals aiming to exert control over what others can read or create. Both forms are intolerable, both are rampant, and we invite you to join us in fighting back.

The first step is to be informed. This issue of *CBLDF Defender* spotlights a broad range of alarming censorship activities at home and abroad, including several cases the Fund has been involved in recently. On page 4, the Censorship Scorecard showcases the current state of book challenges, including recent victories in California, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, and alarming losses in Florida and Oklahoma. The losses show why it's important for individual citizens to pay attention and speak up—censorship can happen when community members allow government to curtail speech without a fight. Throughout our news section, we also showcase international government abuses against cartoonists. Zunar in Malaysia, Ahmed Naji in Egypt, and Musa Kart in Turkey are all courageously fighting for the right to free expression that we sometimes take for granted because the First Amendment guarantees it. Be aware of what battles are raging, so you can watch for them in your community and fight back when they happen.

The next step is to understand and assert your rights. CBLDF is going on the road to help retailers do just that with our Retailer Rights Workshops, outlined on page 7. On pages 12–13, we get ready for Banned Books Week with a discussion of the fundamental rights our community members are guaranteed when it comes to the freedom to read. When you know your rights and can articulate them, you'll be able to push back against censorship when it happens.

Finally, speak up and get involved. On page 11, Maren Williams tells the story of Tessa Kelso, the head librarian of Los Angeles Public Library whose example of courage in the face of adversity is an example to which all free speech advocates should aspire. Keith Colvin of Keith's Comics shares his story of how his store was prosecuted and why he supports CBLDF on page 14. Jason Aaron talks about censorship from a creator's perspective starting on page 8. These individuals are all activists when it comes to the freedom to read. Supporting CBLDF and other anti-censorship groups, being involved in your community, and standing up for the freedom to read will put you in their very good company.

When it comes to free expression, more speech is always preferable to less speech. Stand up for your freedom to read by staying informed, asserting your rights, getting involved, and speaking up. Free expression isn't passively guaranteed—its protection is up to every single one of us!

—Charles Brownstein, Executive Director

CBLDF thanks our Guardian Members:
James Wood Bailey, Grant Geissman, and Philip Harvey

CBLDF's education program made possible with the generous support of the Gaiman Foundation and supporters like you!

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND
is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of the First Amendment rights of the comics art form and its community of retailers, creators, publishers, librarians, educators, and readers. CBLDF provides legal referrals, representation, advice, assistance, and education in furtherance of these goals.

STAFF
Charles Brownstein, *Executive Director*
Alex Cox, *Deputy Director*
Georgia Nelson, *Development Manager*
Betsy Gomez, *Editorial Director*
Maren Williams, *Contributing Editor*
Robert Corn-Revere, *Legal Counsel*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Larry Marder, *President*
Milton Griepp, *Vice President*
Jeff Abraham, *Treasurer*
Dale Cendali, *Secretary*
Jennifer L. Holm
Reginald Hudlin
Katherine Keller
Paul Levitz
Christina Merkler
Chris Powell
Jeff Smith

ADVISORY BOARD
Neil Gaiman & Denis Kitchen, *Co-Chairs*
Susan Alston
Greg Goldstein
Matt Groening
Chip Kidd
Jim Lee
Frenchy Lunning
Frank Miller
Louise Nemschoff
Mike Richardson
William Schanes
Jose Villarrubia
Bob Wayne
Peter Welch

CREDITS
Betsy Gomez, *Designer & Editor*
Charles Brownstein, *Contributor*
Maren Williams, *Contributor*

Defender logo designed by Brian Wood.

Cover art by Olivier Coipel.
Thor is ™ and © Marvel Comics.
Used with permission.

©2017 Comic Book Legal Defense Fund and respective authors.

CORPORATE MEMBERS

COMIC CONTRABAND

Why are comics and books being scrutinized by the TSA?

Comics and books were the targets of added travel scrutiny earlier this year, raising important questions about reader privacy and air travel regulations. First came reports that the Transportation Security Administration was testing new rules that would require books to be removed from carry-on bags for separate scanning, raising privacy concerns in many quarters. Then, in late July there was mass confusion for Comic-Con attendees departing from San Diego International Airport, where United Airlines briefly told travelers that comic books were not allowed in checked bags.

According to the TSA, the test of new scanning procedures for books and other paper items in carry-on bags has come to an end, and there are no plans to implement them permanently. The agency said that the test arose only from scanning machines' limitations in discerning explosives from other contents of packed bags, but even prior to the new rules, there were many documented cases of TSA employees giving increased scrutiny to passengers perceived to be carrying suspicious reading material.

Screening books separately raises concerns about readers' privacy. The American Civil Liberties Union, Modern Language Association, and American Association of University Professors had all voiced concerns about the separate scanning before the test ended. TSA is currently testing the broader screening of digital devices, and in some airports requires smaller electronic devices, including tablets, Kindles, and other e-readers, to be screened separately in the same fashion as laptop computers.

In July, another issue arose when United Airlines told Comic-Con travelers that the TSA was allowing comic books in carry-ons but not checked bags. The federal agency later said it had imposed no such restriction, and ultimately United allowed that it may have mistaken an informal packing guideline for an actual government regulation.

The puzzlement began on the morning of Sunday, July 23, when a traveler posted on Twitter a photo of a United information board that instructed Comic-Con goers to "remove all books from checked bags." United clarified that the restriction was only for comic books and added that it "applies to all airlines operating out of San Diego this weekend and is set by the TSA."

Needless to say, the TSA soon faced a barrage of questions regarding the dubious restriction, but it deflected blame back to United. TSA spokesperson Lorie Dankers told *Ars Technica* that "I don't know how United went ahead and stated a TSA policy incorrectly," but "comic books are not a security threat and we encourage travelers to bring them if they so choose."

Dankers theorized that United may have misinterpreted guidance that the TSA offered Comic-Con attendees last year, which did recommend packing stacks of comics in carry-on bags only because a dense mass of paper in a checked bag "often causes alarms leading to bag searches which can cause a significant slowdown in the screening process." This was presented only as a suggestion to ensure smooth travels, however, and the TSA says it never imposed restrictions on any type of book in either checked or carry-on luggage.

By Monday, July 24, United confirmed in an email to *Ars Technica* that "we misunderstood TSA's instructions and regret any inconvenience this may have caused our customers."

Although these issues appear to be resolved for now, comics fans may be left wondering how they can get through the airport with minimal hassle and scrutiny. As always, you have a right to travel with any literature you may desire, but it's a good idea to remain vigilant when you fly!

by Maren Williams

A directive from United Airlines after Comic-Con International caused consternation among travelers departing San Diego. *(Photo by Twitter user @adichappo. Posted July 23, 2017.)*

Arizona Ethnic Ban Studies Struck Down

A federal judge ruled that Arizona's ban on ethnic studies curricula is both unconstitutional and designed with discriminatory intent. Judge A. Wallace Tashima has not yet issued a final ruling on the next steps, but academic freedom advocates are hoping the law will be struck down, paving the way for the return of Tucson Unified School District's highly successful Mexican American Studies program.

At issue in the case was a state law that was specifically designed to target Tucson's MAS program. The law made it illegal to teach classes that "promote resentment toward a race or class of people" and "are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group." Despite independent audits of the program, which found that it didn't violate the law and in fact improved student performance, the district was forced to shut down the MAS program or face a loss of funding. Subsequently, several books by Mexican American and Native authors were seized from classrooms.

In a preliminary ruling, Judge Tashima found that the law violated students' First Amendment right to receive information and their Fourteenth Amendment right to equal protection. For evidence of discriminatory intent, he was able to draw on vitriolic blog comments against the program that were originally posted anonymously but later found to have been posted by Arizona superintendent of public instruction John Huppenthal while he was in office. Judge Tashima noted that Huppenthal was "pursuing these discriminatory ends in order to make political gains," using the law for a boost in an election campaign.

CBLDF was among several organizations that condemned the dissolution of the MAS program, and we also joined a Freedom to Read Foundation amicus brief in the case. We are cautiously optimistic in light of Judge Tashima's preliminary ruling, but we'll hold the celebrations until we see what remedy he proposes.

CENSORSHIP SCORECARD

CBLDF joins coalition efforts to protect the freedom to read comics. Taking an active stand against all instances of censorship curbs precedent that could adversely affect the rights upon which comics readers depend. Here are a few of our latest cases...

California

WIN: After months of delay, the Conejo Valley School Board voted 4-1 to approve Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* as part of the 9th grade curriculum. The holdup was due to stalling from board president Mike Dunn, who ultimately cast the single vote against it.

Oklahoma

LOSS: CBLDF led the Kids' Right to Read Project in defending Ariel Schrag's *Stuck in the Middle* after it was pulled from the Del Crest Middle School library in February. A statement at the time from Mid-Del Schools indicated that the district had formed a review committee per policy, but school board meeting notes include no discussion of the book. As of late August, the online library catalog indicates that the middle school no longer holds a copy of the book.

Minnesota

WIN: In a 3-2 vote, the school board for the New London-Spicer school district affirmed an administrator's defense of Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. The book is part of the 8th grade curriculum, and it was challenged by two parents who said it contained "gratuitous and unnecessary" profanity and references to sex.

Wisconsin

WIN: CBLDF joined KRRP in urging the Sauk Prairie School District to keep Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* in the curriculum. After a rather eventful challenge process that included a secret vote, the school board announced that members unanimously chose to retain the book in the 9th grade curriculum.

Florida

LOSS: Governor Rick Scott signed legislation that will facilitate challenges to classroom materials, allowing any county resident to lodge a challenge against textbooks or supplemental materials that they claim fail to present "a noninflammatory, objective, and balanced viewpoint on issues." Intellectual freedom advocates are bracing for challenges on multiple topics of public contention, from evolution and climate change to fictional works featuring Muslim or LGBTQIA characters.

Zunar Sues Police Over Books Lost in Raid

Malaysian political cartoonist Zunar has filed a lawsuit against police seeking the return of books and t-shirts that were seized in a raid of one of his public fan events. He also wants to recoup lost sales of about $5,200 for the merchandise taken from his "Tea with Zunar" fundraiser last December. Zunar's lawyer N. Surendran explained in a statement yesterday that any future raids will be met with the same response:

> If again, in future Zunar does another exhibition, whoever tries to do this again, be it the police or anybody else, we will take you to court and you will have to answer to the court. There will be no more tolerance for this kind of unlawful behaviour against a person whose only crime is to criticise the authorities. That is the democratic right of every Malaysian.

Egyptian Novelist Ahmed Naji Banned From Travel

Egyptian novelist Ahmed Naji has been prevented from traveling through the Cairo airport by a government travel ban. When Naji went to travel in July, he was turned away. According to a Facebook post by Naji, this was "on the basis of a decision by the Attorney General." The Attorney General's office confirmed that the travel ban was issued "concerning the publication of a chapter of the novel *The Use of Life*." The novel incorporates graphic novel elements, and Naji was sentenced to two years prison over the publication of an excerpt. He was successful in having the sentence vacated but is facing retrial.

Winnie the Pooh Banned Again on Chinese Social Media

Winnie the Pooh has become the latest casualty in the ongoing war between online censors and the internet denizens of China. Users of Chinese social media sites Weibo and Wechat found themselves censored when referencing Winnie the Pooh due to a meme comparing the A.A. Milne character to Chinese president Xi Jinping. This isn't the first time that Chinese censors have targeted Winnie the Pooh. In 2013 a meme comparing a photo of Xi and U.S. President Barack Obama to a picture of Winnie the Pooh and Tigger went viral and led to a similar ban.

Find out more about these stories and get the latest news every day at http://cbldf.org!

The Slants *(Photo from the band's website.)*

"THE BAND WHO MUST NOT BE NAMED" WINS SUPREME COURT CASE

The Supreme Court unanimously struck down portions of the Lanham Act and supported an Asian-American band's right to an "offensive" trademark.

When the activist Asian-American rock band decided on a name that both affirms their racial identity and reclaims a racist term as a way to challenge stereotypes—The Slants—they likely didn't expect to end up in front of the Supreme Court. But then the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) denied their trademark application. The PTO determined that The Slants were in violation of portions of the Lanham Act, which denies registration to trademarks "which may disparage ... persons, living or dead, institutions, beliefs, or national symbols."

Organizations from both ends of the political spectrum signed on in support of The Slants and their First Amendment rights. CBLDF joined a Cato Institute-led amicus brief to the Supreme Court asking, "Should the government get to decide what's a slur?"

In the decision, the Supreme Court affirmed that "With few narrow exceptions, a fundamental principle of the First Amendment is that the government may not punish or suppress speech based on disapproval of the ideas or perspectives the speech conveys."

Learn more at http://cbldf.org/?p=31319

FREE SPEECH ON TRIAL

Cartoonist Musa Kart faces 29 years in prison.
(Image source: OBC Transeuropa)

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's post-coup crackdown on the media has led to the arrest of hundreds of journalists, including several cartoonists.

Following a judge's order, Turkish cartoonist Musa Kart is out of prison after nine months of pre-trial detention along with six colleagues from *Cumhuriyet* newspaper. Four more are still locked up, however, and all of the defendants still face charges that could result in prison sentences. Kart faces up to 29 years in prison.

Kart and his colleagues are not alone: about 150 journalists are currently jailed in Turkey, and more than 170 media outlets have been shut down or taken over by the government in the 13 months since a failed military coup. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has cited national security concerns as cover for a purge of the media, universities, military, and judiciary.

In his opening statement at trial, Kart expounded on the vital role of independent media, including editorial cartoonists, in preserving democracy:

> Whilst organisational structures that are based upon violence rely upon taboos, the role of humour and of cartoons is to categorically destroy taboo. For that reason, those opposed to democracy do not like humorists and humorists, likewise, have no time for structures that worship violence.

Kart has long been a critic of Erdoğan, winning the 2005 Courage in Editorial Cartooning Award from Cartoonists Rights Network International after he successfully fought a lawsuit over a cartoon depicting then-Prime Minister Erdoğan as "a kitten entangled in a ball of yarn." In 2014 he was again acquitted after Erdoğan sued over a cartoon that criticized the president's apparent role in a graft scandal.

Other cartoonists and even citizens who simply shared cartoons on social media have been ensnared in the authoritarian crackdown:

- Dogan Güzel, the recipient of CRNI's very first Courage Award in 1999, was arrested along with nearly two dozen other people when the Kurdish newspaper *Özgür Gündem* was shut down by government order.
- Actor and columnist Orhan Aydin was given a suspended sentence of 11 months and 20 days prison for insulting Erdoğan after he shared a cartoon by Brazilian Carlos Latuff on social media.
- The satirical magazine *Gırgır* was abruptly shut down and all of its staff laid off in response to a cartoon that irreverently depicted Moses and was deemed offensive to both Jews and Muslims.
- Artist and journalist Zehra Doğan was sentenced to two years and 10 months in prison for her painting showing the aftermath of the government's assault on the Kurdish city of Nusaybin. Authorities claimed that she endangered security by depicting an ongoing military operation, but in fact her painting was based on a government photograph that showed the same scene.
- Another satirical magazine, *LeMan*, was prevented from printing a special post-coup edition with a cover cartoon suggesting that the government deliberately pitted civilians against the military plotters. Undaunted, the magazine instead ran a cartoon of its staff playing cards and drinking tea since they were unable to cover the news.

by Maren Williams

CBLDF'S RETAILER RIGHTS WORKSHOPS PROTECT COMIC STORES!

CBLDF's new workshop is designed to help comics retailers understand their rights and defend themselves in case of First Amendment emergency!

CBLDF's experts are going on the road to help protect comic book stores with our new Retailer Rights Workshop! Beginning this fall and continuing throughout 2018, CBLDF's new workshop offers an in-depth training session offering practical information about the rights stores depend on to do business.

These workshops separate truth from fiction about legal matters such as obscenity and harmful to minors laws and provide useful how-tos for dealing with police visits, searches, seizures, media attacks, customer complaints, and other emergencies that can threaten your store.

CBLDF's Retailer Rights Workshop will bring our experts to your community, creating an unparalleled training opportunity for comic store staff and an excellent chance to bolster your store's defenses against whatever legal threats are on the horizon.

During the Retailer Rights Workshop, you and your staff will learn about:

Legal issues that can impact the materials you carry and how they're displayed.

Preventative measures and policies.

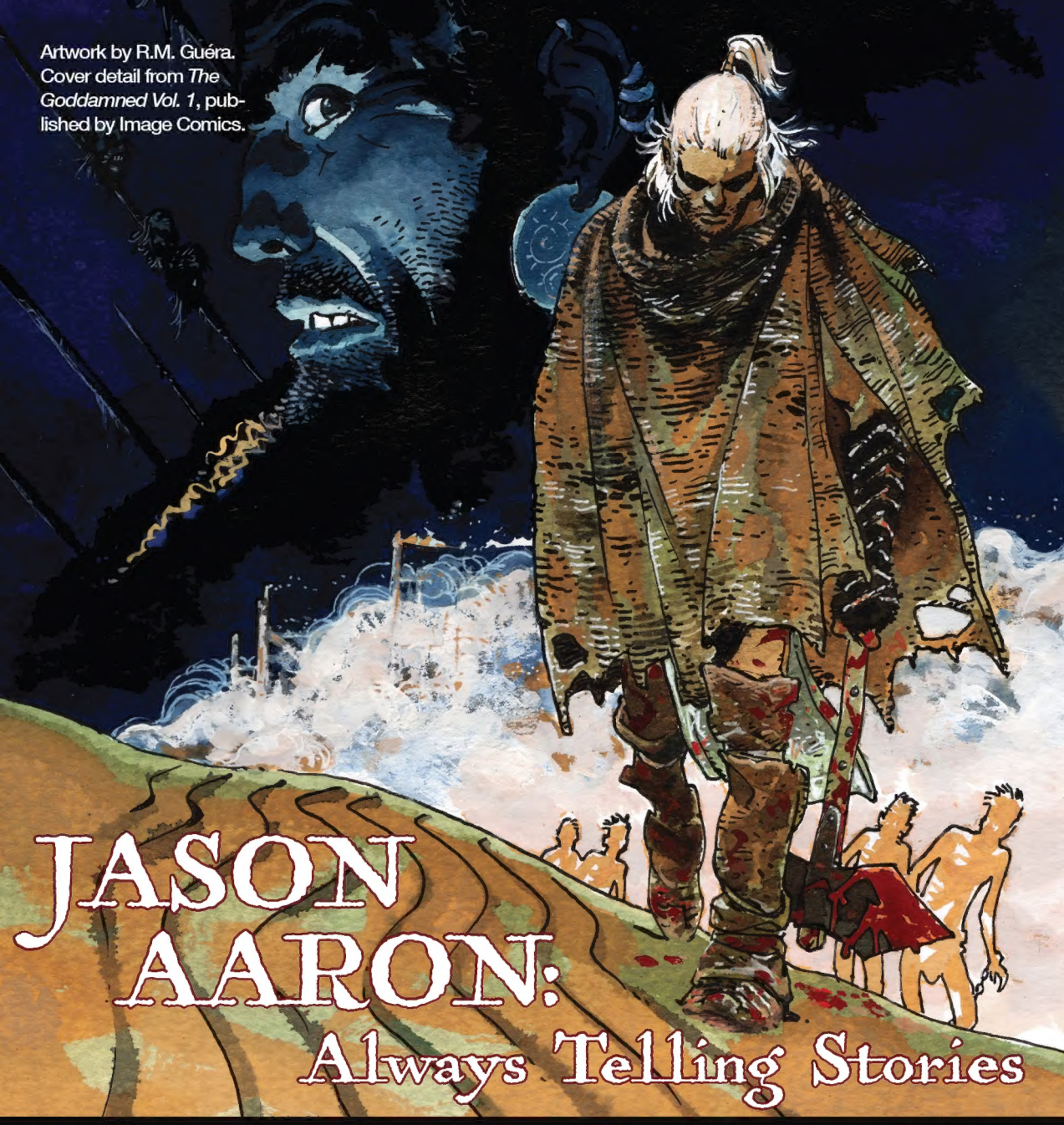
Techniques for handling police visits, media attacks, customer complaints, and protests.

CBLDF cases involving retailers.

How CBLDF can assist you in the event of a First Amendment emergency.

If you are interested in hosting or participating in a workshop, contact CBLDF at info@cbldf.org

REMEMBER:
Call 1-800-99-CBLDF or email info@cbldf.org at the first sign of a First Amendment emergency!



Artwork by R.M. Guéra. Cover detail from *The Goddamned Vol. 1*, published by Image Comics.

JASON AARON: Always Telling Stories

Jason Aaron has become a household name in the comics community, for good reason. Crime comics, the God of Thunder, the biggest movie franchise in history—Aaron has written them all and then some. We caught an increasingly rare moment with Aaron to talk about comics and censorship.

Interview by Betsy Gomez

You were a comics lover from a kid. What were some of the comics and creators that inspired you to become a comic book writer?

I was mostly a DC guy as a kid, so stuff like a lot of *Batman*, *Swamp Thing*. *New Teen Titans* was one of my favorite books. All those weird books that DC did in the '80s that [are] maybe a little forgotten like *Atari Force*, *Blue Devil*, *Blue Beetle*. So, that was the kind of stuff that got me going to the spinner racks every week. *New Teen Titans* was the first comic where I went back and got the issues I'd missed, and I never stopped.

I never had that period in college or anything where I stopped collecting comics. I still go to the comic book store on Wednesday and have a big pull list—a way bigger pull list than I probably should have, because I'm always behind reading stuff.

What draws you to comics in particular? Why write comics as opposed to short stories or novels?

I don't know why that sort of latched onto my brain at such a young age, but it did. And it was a good time to be getting into comics. Of course it was superhero stuff that drew me in, but then you had that explosion of other publishers in the '80s, so you started reading all sorts of different genres and comics. I have written short stories, and I've made a couple of shitty attempts at writing a novel. I'd still love to do that someday, but just for whatever reason the language of comics always spoke to me in some sense, and that's really what I wanted to do with my life since I was about 12 years old.

Now that you're basically writing everything—*Star Wars*, *Thor*, *Doctor Strange*—is there a character that you haven't had a chance to write yet, that you really want to work on?

Yeah, there's a bunch. I don't really chase jobs as a fan, even the stuff I've done at Marvel. I was never really a huge Thor fan as a reader. I read the [Walter] Simonson stuff, but that was kind of my only exposure to Thor over the years. But for whatever reason, for me as a creator, that kind of sparked at the right time. I wanted to do Thor. I don't really walk around with a bag of like, 'I love the Fantastic Four, here's my Fantastic Four pitch' or whatever. Which I do love the FF, and I'd love to write them someday. I kind of just do whatever feels right at the time.

That said, there's tons of stuff that I'm a fan of, from Uncle Scrooge—I'd love to write an Uncle Scrooge comic—to Godzilla, Tarzan, Hawkman. In terms of Marvel stuff, I've written most of the major characters at this point. I'd like to write more Spider-Man at some point. When I first broke into comics, nobody would have thought of me as a Spider-Man guy because I was doing mostly stories where people got shot and stabbed, but I really like writing Spider-Man.

Your creator-owned stuff tends to be pretty mature—*Scouts*, *Southern Bastards*, and *The Goddamned*. Do you ever worry that your work might be censored?

The Goddamned?

Any of it, really.

Well, I asked people what they thought about it, asked Image Comics, and asked a couple of retailers. You know: "What if we just called it *The Goddamned*?" The title changed a few times, and I didn't quite have the title that I liked. But nobody seemed to bat an eye.

For a book like that, it's also important to let people know what kind of book it was. Yeah, you could soften up the title, but it's not changing the book. So, I like the idea that if you pick the book up and it's called *The Goddamned*, if you look at the cover, you should know what you're getting yourself into. I never really worried about, 'is this going to affect our sales in any way or whatever,' because again, you either get the book or you don't get the book.

Have you caught hell from anybody for the book because it's tackling a topic that's pretty sacred to a lot of Americans?

No, surprisingly little. Of course the book is not going to be everybody's cup of tea...

I was raised Christian, growing up in the South, raised in the Baptist church. I've considered myself an atheist for about 20 years, but I've always been fascinated with these stories of religion in general and stories from the Bible, specifically the period of time before the Flood. So, if anything, we're doing what you can consider an accurate portrayal of that story. We're trying to be relatively faithful. If you believe the story that the world was so fucked up and completely out of control that God had to just wipe the slate clean, pretty much and start over—I was always fascinated by exploring that world. It gives me and R.M. Guéra the chance to do what's kind of a crime story, kind of a Conan story, kind of a Western that still has weird dinosaurs and monsters and angels and all that sort of stuff.

With the current political climate and the specter of censorship, do you feel like it's keeping creators from realizing their potential? Do you feel like it's holding creators back in any sort of way?

Yeah, maybe. I think I can understand people being more afraid of backlash now or the kind

of backlash that they would get. I mean, I hope not! To me, I try to never think about that sort of stuff for better or for worse. I don't know how to write a book to please everyone, I just know how to write stuff to please myself. I always feel like what I do is kind of a selfish pursuit, that I'm really just making up comics that I enjoy. If I enjoy it, hopefully other people will as well. The flip side of that is there are people who are really not going to enjoy them.

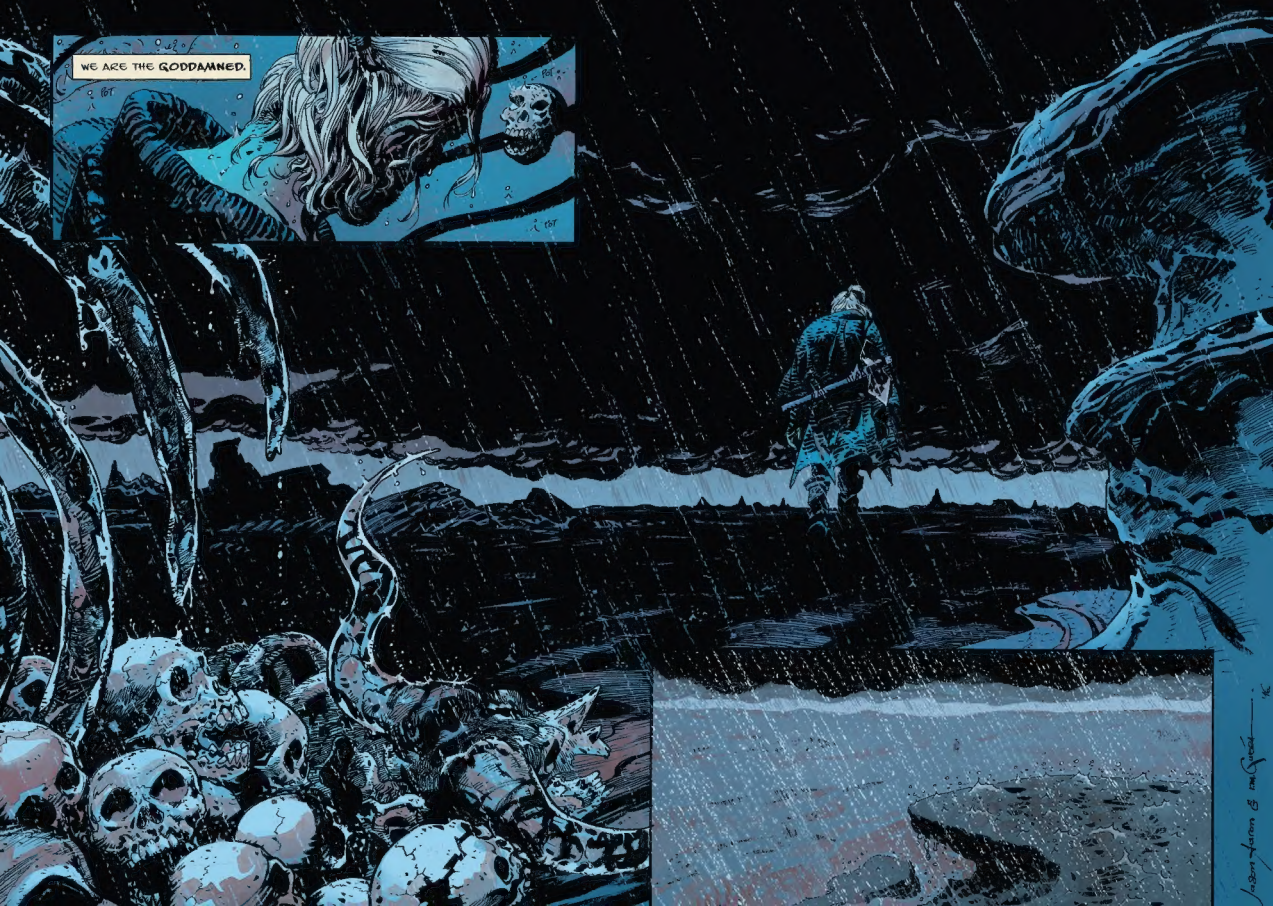
There was an important moment for me as a young writer when I was in college, the first time you encounter somebody who really doesn't like the stuff you do or is offended by it. I went to a really small school, and my friends and my mom and everybody would read my stuff and tell me I was really good. Then, I go to college, the first time somebody tells you, 'This is really terrible, you should not be doing this.' You know, you don't stop, and for me in comics, that's kind of the way it goes. The bigger the stuff you do, the longer you're in comics, the more people are going to be yelling at you on occasion. But I take comfort in the fact that for all of my favorite writers in comics, you can go online and find somebody who tells you they're terrible. So, you're in good company.

You've been a longtime supporter of CBLDF. Why is CBLDF's mission important to you?

Anything that protects the rights of creators to tell the stories they want to tell and all the other people involved in that process along the way, including the retailers who are selling the books. Because again, it's a weird time, especially in comics where we feel like, as readers sometimes, if something doesn't seem to appeal directly to me or wasn't made for me, then it's wrong, that clearly they fucked up and I don't like this, so we must change this thing to make it something that I like.

The flip side is that there's a lot of really good stuff in comics right now, both inside and outside the mainstream. You see creators really pushing to appeal to a wider, more diverse group of readers. I think it's a delicate time right now, to make sure that doesn't go away or get pushed aside or get put back in the box.

Artwork by R.M. Guéra. Interior spread from *The Goddamned Vol. 1*, published by Image Comics.



"Cleanse the Library by Fire"

How one early Los Angeles librarian faced down the censors...

Tessa Kelso served as head librarian of Los Angeles Public Library for only a few years in the 1890s, but she left an indelible mark on the city and the profession as an intellectual freedom pioneer, defending her collection from moralists who wanted to "cleanse the library by fire."

Kelso was hired as LAPL's sixth head librarian in 1889, when the population of Los Angeles was only about 50,000. As ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom contributor Robert Fernandez discovered while researching contemporaneous newspaper articles, Kelso soon found herself in a pitched battle with the *Los Angeles Herald*.

The first mention of Kelso in the *Herald*, on January 21, 1893, was quite favorable, with the newspaper touting the library under her leadership as "second to none in the state, even excepting that of San Francisco." Something changed by the end of the year, however, when a December 13 *Herald* article labeled Kelso "the expensive appendage of an expensive institution" after she successfully sued the city to reimburse her $200 travel costs for the ALA conference and the World Congress of Librarians in Chicago.

Seven months later, in July 1894, the *Herald*'s drumbeat against supposed waste in the library continued. In an assessment that will be sadly familiar to many librarians today, the reporters could not imagine that library workers did anything beyond checking in and checking out books. This was far from the truth, of course; in addition to circulation, Kelso's staff would have been handling tasks like ordering, processing, repairing, binding, and cataloging books and other materials. In the days before computers or even widespread use of typewriters, cataloging was particularly time-consuming, as it required meticulously handwritten catalog cards for every item.

Eventually, the *Herald*'s ire turned to LAPL's collections. Under the headline "An Indescribable Revelation," the reporters announced that the library held "novels of such indescribable atrocity that human nature itself is violated." Their particular target in this case was *Le Cadet* (*The Younger Brother*) by Jean Richepin, a slightly risqué novel that the library held only in the original French.

The delicate flowers at the *Herald* concluded that "this awful book would be thrown with indignation out of the house of the most infamous *maison de joie* [brothel] in the world." The *Herald* formulated a theory whereby government censorship is surely bad, but censorship in public libraries doesn't really count. Or, as they put it:

> Such censorship has no reference to the suppression of thought or subjection of the mind, but has entire relation to the protection of ingenuous youth, on the one hand, and to the unequivocal rebuke, on the other, to salacious and corrupting writers.

The *Herald* then reprinted in their entirety two sermons from local pastors on the dangers of reading certain books. In his declamation "The Evils of Vile Books," Rev. J.W. Campbell of First Methodist Church said that a sudden surge in popularity of *Le Cadet* since it was first described in the *Herald* only proved that the community needed to be protected from itself. Even more strikingly, Campbell anticipated Fredric Wertham's claims that "bad books" could lead directly to youth violence. He enthusiastically embraced the *Herald*'s suggestion that "a public bonfire should be instituted to rid the library of all books of a questionable character."

Campbell's sermon—and an accompanying prayer for Kelso's soul—were apparently the last straw for the librarian. She filed suit against him for slander, saying that he had implied she "was by reason of moral delinquencies unworthy of [her] office." Several months later she was vindicated by the court.

Despite her legal victory, Kelso had apparently had enough of the constant battles. In 1895, she submitted her resignation at LAPL and headed east to work in publishing.

by Maren Williams

Learn more at http://cbldf.org/?p=31668

Tessa Kelso

Banned Books Week: Celebrating Our Right to Read!

Each year, we celebrate the freedom to read during Banned Books Week! This year, the theme is "Our Right to Read," making it a great opportunity to brush up on our rights as educators, librarians, retailers, and readers!

The First Amendment protects the freedom to read. Everyone is entitled to express their opinions about a book, but they don't have the right to limit another person's access to information. This kind of censorship is most effective when people don't act to stop it. Here are some fundamentals to help protect your rights when it comes to freedom of speech!

Educators

Teachers are the foundation of our free society. Their proximity to younger readers also puts them on the front line in the battle for free expression and the right to read.

If you're a teacher, you should understand that your rights can vary by school or school district, so be sure to get acquainted with your institution's collection development and challenge policies. If your school lacks such policies, volunteer to help craft them.

Public and private institutions are different. Government entities like public schools are bound by the First Amendment, but private schools can have a narrower set of guidelines.

Generally speaking, parents can object to assignments and request alternatives for their children, but they can't make you remove content. A single complaint shouldn't override the professional judgment of educators in shaping curriculum. For guidance on adding and using specific comics, visit CBLDF's resources for educators and librarians at http://cbldf.org/librarian-tools/

Librarians

Public libraries provide resources for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people in their community. The American Library Association provides a vast range of resources, policies and best practices to help support your ability to serve the community. Among the principles articulated in ALA's Library Bill of Rights:

- Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

Celebrate the right to read with the *CBLDF Banned Books Week Handbook*! http://cbldf.org/?p=32006

Artwork by Jillian Tamaki. From *This One Summer*, the most frequently challenged book of 2016. Published by First Second. *(This One Summer © Jillian Tamaki and Mariko Tamaki.)*

Retailers

The First Amendment protects the right to sell all kinds of material, including material for adults and mature readers. Key principles that ensure you and your staff are safe:

- Establish good policies and follow them. By having some specific guidelines in place and making sure every member of your staff is on the same page, you can defuse a First Amendment emergency.
- Thoughtfully display content. Every community is different, so be deliberate in how you display material. It may be helpful to segregate material for younger readers into its own section, rack mature titles on a high shelf, or even keep some more adult material in its own section.
- Talk to your customers and be involved in your community. If you're well-established as part of the community, people are more likely to try to work out a solution one-on-one than to take an adversarial approach.

CBLDF's Retailer Rights Workshops provide even more information. Contact CBLDF at info@cbldf.org to learn more!

Readers

The First Amendment protects your right to access information. Here are some ways you can help uphold that right:

- **Stay informed!** Keep in touch with your local librarians and educators to find out about book challenges. Subscribe to news publications dedicated to free expression, such as CBLDF's free weekly email newsletter.
- **Report censorship!** Reporting challenges helps free expression advocates gather information about what materials are at risk. Even if a challenged book isn't a comic, tell CBLDF! You can reach us at info@cbldf.org or call 1-800-99-CBLDF.
- **Speak up!** Attempts to ban books rarely succeed when people speak out against them. Whether it is a school board or library meeting, be there to speak up for the right to read. Write letters to your local administrators and politicians. Be prepared to stand up for all books, even those you may not like. Any successful book ban opens the door to more censorship.

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 15, 2017: Library of Congress

- Library of Congress Madison Building, Washington, D.C.
- https://www.loc.gov/rr/news/calendar.html

September 16-17, 2017: Small Press Expo

- Marriott North Bethesda Hotel & Conference Center, Bethesda, MD
- http://www.smallpressexpo.com/

October 5-8, 2017: New York Comic Con

- Javits Center, New York, NY
- http://www.newyorkcomiccon.com/

Schedule subject to change. Visit cbldf.org for updates.

NOW AVAILABLE

CBLDF Banned Books Week Handbook 2017

Cover: Jillian Tamaki

Comics are the most banned books in the U.S.! Discover the books facing censorship, and explore our practical ideas for hosting Banned Books Week events in your community! (Starts at $5 donation for a bundle of ten. https://tinyurl.com/ycnchxkr)

COMING SOON

Panel Power

Cover: Matthew Loux
Art & story: various

CBLDF spotlights the power of comics in U.S. English, U.K. English, and Spanish! An introduction to comics, including evidence-based background on why they're good for kids, and battles misconceptions about the format. Available in October!

RETAIL MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

CBLDF's work is possible because of our members, which include comics retailers like Keith Colvin at Keith's Comics, with multiple locations in the Dallas-Forth Worth area. Sometimes, we need to come to their defense...

Learn more about the Jesus Castillo case at http://cbldf.org/?p=924

In 2000, one of your employees, Jesus Castillo, was arrested and charged with obscenity for the sale of comics. How did the case impact you?

It instilled a ton of paranoia into my business decisions. The obscenity case boiled down to a straight attack on comics content. That a comic, drawn on paper, could be found so offensive that a person can not possess or sell it was not in my thought process. I naively thought if we handled content with adult themes and images responsibly, there could be no problem. I was wrong...

We had to make a decision to remove anything that self-identified as "Adult Content," and we reviewed a lot more items for possible issues. For a decade after the issue, we had "the chain" in the middle of our stores... You had to be 18 or older to unhook the chain and proceed to the back—98% of the items past the chain were all-ages and had no "Adult Content," but the occasional art book or indy book could have some adult content.

What advice would you give a retailer to prevent or deal with a similar situation?

Know your rights, know how to deal with the public, the police, and the media beforehand. You will not be able to think quickly or clearly once you are in it. You need to have a frank discussion with your company's attorney about how they would like you to deal with the issue now so you are prepared in case you are ever in the situation.

If you are in this situation, call your attorney, and then call CBLDF. Get advice, and know you are not alone.

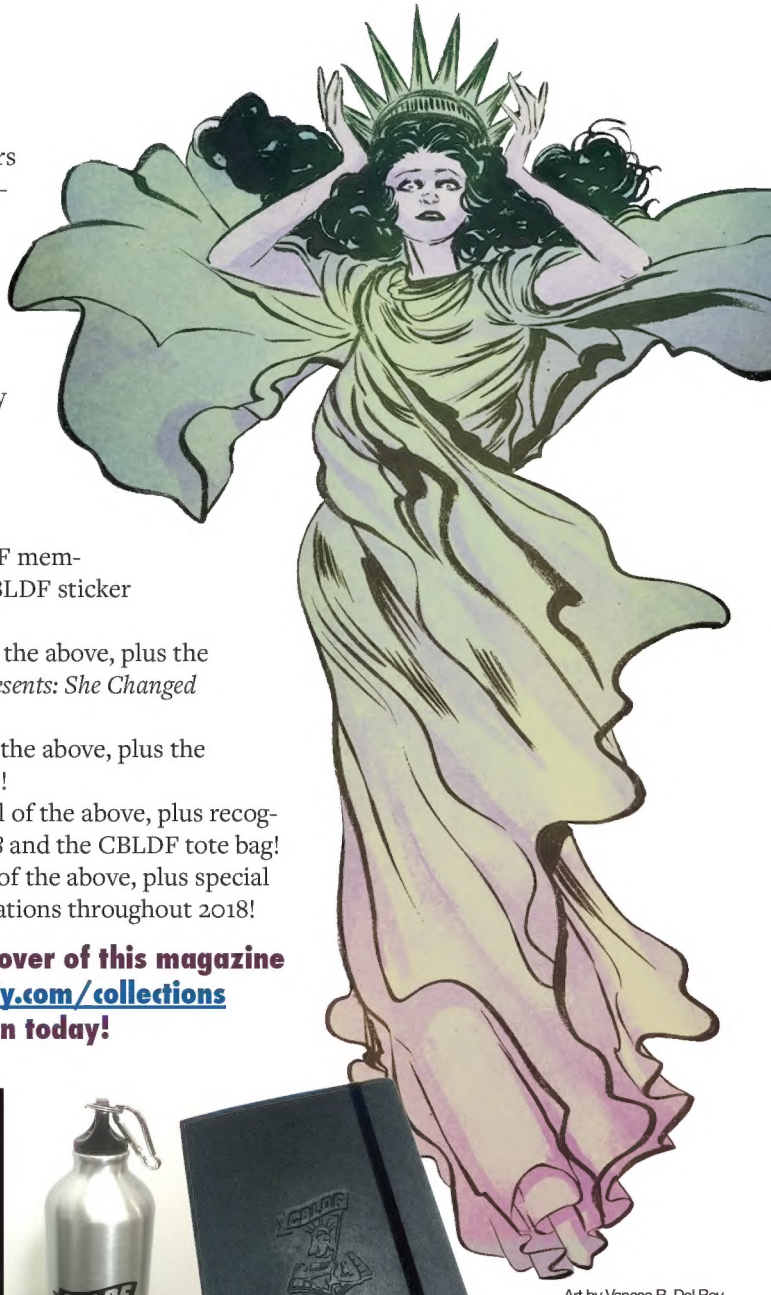
Read the full interview at cbldf.org!

JOIN THE FIGHT!

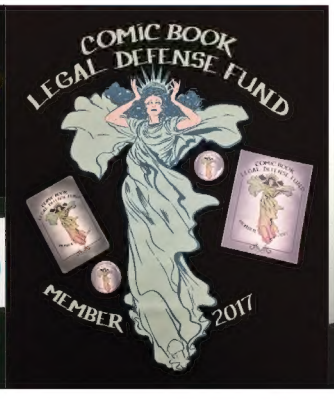
We have membership plans for donors in every budget, and all of them are tax-deductible:

- **$100 Member** CBLDF membership card, CBLDF button set, CBLDF sticker set, CBLDF member patch, and EXCLUSIVE member-only t-shirt featuring art by Vanesa R. Del Rey!
- **Associate Member** Name your donation, as low as $5! Comes with the CBLDF membership card.
- **$50 Supporter Member** CBLDF membership card, CBLDF button set, CBLDF sticker set, and CBLDF member patch.
- **$250 Defender Member** All of the above, plus the CBLDF water bottle and *CBLDF Presents: She Changed Comics!*
- **$500 Protector Member** All of the above, plus the CBLDF embossed executive journal!
- **$1,000 Champion Member** All of the above, plus recognition in *CBLDF Liberty Annual 2018* and the CBLDF tote bag!
- **$2,500 Guardian Member** All of the above, plus special recognition in select CBLDF publications throughout 2018!

Use the signup form on the back cover of this magazine or visit http://cbldf.myshopify.com/collections/memberships to join today!



Art by Vanesa R. Del Rey



RADIO FREE COMIX!

A mix of interviews, discussions about censorship, panel recordings, and archival materials, the CBLDF Podcast is a monthly event, from our keyboards to your ears. In the most recent episodes: interviews with **Gilbert Hernandez** (*Love & Rockets*), **Ed Luce** (*Wuvable Oaf*), **Sarah Glidden** (*Rolling Blackouts*), and **Matthew Rosenberg** (*Rocket Raccoon*)! The CBLDF Podcast is made possible in part by a donation from the Gaiman Foundation and member support.

Listen at http://cbldf.org/podcast

Comic Book Legal Defense Fund
811 SW Naito Parkway, Suite 100
Portland, Oregon 97204
www.cbldf.org
info@cbldf.org
1-800-99-CBLDF

Compliments of: